VIOLENCE IN COMICS EXPLORED

A Superman Stamp?

FANBOY!

JOURNAL OF COMIC FANDOM

From Jill To Jedi

Tony Akins Tackles the Force While Jill Thompson Speaks Her Mind

plus: Comic Fans In Cyberspace: How To Connect To A BBS *and* A Sneak Preview of Marvel's Upcoming Best!

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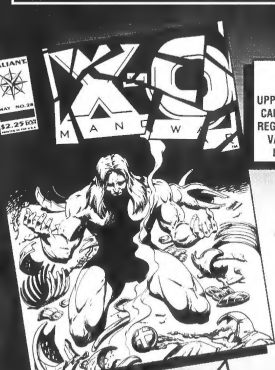

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VALIANT®

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FANBOY!

JOURNAL OF COMIC FANDOM

FANBOY!™ 3

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America On Line

Fanboy
Comics, Cards & Collectibles

Fanboy Magazine
The Rest Of Us BBS

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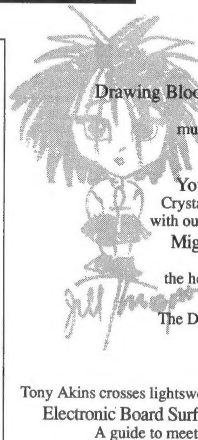
Thank you: Larry Parr, Jill Thompson, Tony Akins, Frank, Blair, Larry Charet, Sung Koo.

For advertising rates and dealer inquiries:
Crystal MonAmour
1-708-456-0670.

"...typos and all."

Printed In USA



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Biting the fan that heeds you

What a change in direction we've taken from our cover concept to the finished issue! There are a few reasons why we aren't featuring the intended Sexism & Racism issue as described in advance catalogs from our distributors. Reason one is that those catalogs are written months in advance and for a comic book, that's fine; you certainly have a clear idea of what storyline to follow, but for a news-related magazine, that spells disaster. The law of averages tells us that if things can change, they will. Well, they did.

Continued on page 2

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Biting the fan that heeds you

(Continued from page 1)

With a handful of people telling us about first-hand incidents of sexism in the industry, we set up meetings, laid out the space and started putting it all together. Sexism, we found, is not like doing an interview about upcoming projects. While it discriminates at the lowest of levels -ie: you are less because you aren't one of us- it flourishes. Instead of speaking up about it, a lot of people pulled back and clammed up on us; pretty sad for an industry that CREATED awareness of alienation with dynamic zeal. The X-Men, Spider-Man, Wolverine were shunned as misfits; we embraced them for their uniqueness. Ironically, the same can't always be said in real life.

It didn't stop others from addressing the issue, and in fact, it *attracted* a few more potentials at five-minutes-after-presstime; let's see if they hang tough for an upcoming issue. Nonetheless, we *will* continue to probe the problem, with our apologies to readers who expected "Sexism & Racism". To those who shied away, this warning: history warns us that discrimination unchecked can obliterate nations. If you think it can't happen to you, keep ducking...

The best of all things happened in mid-issue: we received opportunities to chat with a couple of mega-greats: Jill Thompson and Tony Akins. Jill visited with fan/writer Crystal MonAmour, who was an even bigger fan after their meeting.

Tony Akins tore himself away from the board long enough to show me his upcoming Jedi project for Dark Horse. Typically Tony, the art is great!

Finally, a request: tell people about us. A lot of store owners won't look beyond their noses until you tell them to. Reacquaint them with the written word: show 'em Fanboy! or tell them you'll throw your bucks elsewhere. In fact, when in Chicago, patronize our advertisers: Variety, Earwax, Chicago Comix and Halley's. Without their support -and *your* support, Fanboy! would fold -period! Then where would you get all of the juicy gossip?

Best wishes throughout 1994!

Marcus

TRUE HYPE

MANGA FOR THE NINTENDO CROWD! **Ranma 1/2,** the popular Japanese animated series hit the U.S. in the pages of VIZ Comics. Now it's a Super NES game from DTMC. The animated series is the brainchild of Rumiko Takahashi and was, until very recently, the #1 rated cartoon in Japan. Lucky you. You get to do more than watch: you get to play with it! Plays cool with fun and flash.

MARVEL ON SCREEN: YOURS! Imagine having mutants on your Mac as you work through the day. Berkeley Systems, the dynamic economy that brought us **AFTER DARK®** screen savers, has taken the Marvel oath of loyalty and issued - hold on fanboys- Marvel screen savers and wallpaper! Available for Windows AND Macs, **MARVEL SCREEN POSTERS** features 35+ to-die-for images ranging from Captain America's Golden Age origin page to She-Hulk at the beach. Historic covers, classic confrontations and some never before published work by famous Marvel artists make this one awesome package. Definitely THE hottest stuff among hipper desktop junkies. Seen it, love it, we feeb for it...

Spider-Man Magazine debuts in February, 1994 as a new, 32-page 'zine for children aged 6-10. Know those Fleer Ultra cards everybody is flipping over? Viddy this: the premier issue carries an uncut sheet of 4 Ultra cards featuring X-men. Watch for Spidey cards in spring! Cover price: $1.95 brings games, puzzles and original Spidey and X-Men stories. John Romita's cover is worth buying on its own merits.

CLASSIC RED BALLOON IS FREED Two classic shorts, long hard to find, are at last released together on one tape at $24.95. The award-winning **Red Balloon** (1956) and **White Mane** (1952) are here via Public Media Home Video: 800-262-8600.

Italian native Pino Rinaldi joins Marvel UK as artist on **Wild Angels.** Pino has a great track record with graphic novels like **1984** and **Lancio Story.** Watch him ◄ get even hotter!

Kim "Howard" Johnson hosts Moondog's Pop Culture Radio Hour on WCBR 92.7 Chicago. Regulars include Joe Quesada, Jim Palmiotti, Larry Marder. Rumored to syndicate in '94. Excellent!

COFFIN NAILS Mary Jane gets an eyefull of the big "C" in **Amazing Spider-Man #385.** Peter hates kissing an ashtray, and he gives MJ the message in *very* ▼ graphic terms.

Wild Angels and Spider-Man ©copyright 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group

WH-WHAT...WHAT HAPPENED?!
THE "BIG C," BABE! LUNG CANCER! H-HWALK E NOT TO MENTION A LITTLE HEART ATTACK. HWAAG E..!
BUT I'M GONNA BEAT IT, YOU BE-BET'CHA!! GAHK!
HEY, 'SCUSE THE BLOOD!

DRAWING BLOOD

violence: a reality check

Have You Ever Been In A Fight? It can be a very frightening experience. Do you remember that very first punch in the nose? You really didn't want to fight, did you? No doubt, you would have preferred some other way to settle the argument. Unfortunately, the other person was decidedly unreasonable. In fact, he was a violent bully who was determined to humiliate you. Of course, it was a traumatic experience. I must confess that it certainly traumatized me. Comic books are crammed with fist fights. In fact, some issues are nothing but one long fight. I believe Stan Lee coined a phrase to dismiss the violence: Marvel comics have heroes who don't get hurt and villains who don't feel pain. It is a legitimate point. The fantasy is not meant to be taken seriously. However, there is just one problem: violence is not a trivial matter. At least, it's no longer trivial in this day and age. Trust me when I tell you that a punch to the face is a serious crime. The technical term for it is "criminal assault and battery." It is a criminal act for which a person may be sent to prison. And deservedly so. Therefore, I looked at how physical abuse is treated in comics. Is it viewed as a crime? Is the Moon composed of Swiss cheese?

In comic books, fighting is a simple matter of fun and games. Spider-Man considers it a lark, on a par with exercise. The violent denouement is an unwritten law. The hero must always beat the heck out of the villain. And to tell you the truth, I wouldn't have it any other way. But what about the aftermath? Shouldn't the reader be made aware of the social costs incurred by violence? Never mind the injuries that the hero sustained, how much does it cost the government to hospitalize the villain?

If the villain's teeth were knocked out, does the government pay for his dentures? Was anyone else injured in the melee? If so, who pays their hospital bills? Was there property damage? Who is responsible for sheltering the people who were made homeless?

Each and every comic book hero should consider at least some of these things before confronting some major sociopath. Stop screaming! These things won't bring a story to a screeching halt! If they are regularly addressed, nothing more than a panel or two would be needed to get the points across. In fact, in the hands of a genuinely creative writer, these subjects would probably be quite thought provoking, or in any case, they certainly could be raised.

What about the cavalier attitude that many writers have about death? They seem to create unique methods for mass murder just to have a high body count. A disturbing sidenote is that

most of today's writers have never encountered death or war or the effects of famine and disease. With a bumper crop of post-baby boomers now entering the creative workforce, many of them will routinely hack out tales of gore and violence without ever having tasted its true bitterness. There are few, if any, law enforcement officers who would embrace the notion of getting in the middle of a domestic dispute more than once, but taken to the pages of many comics-code approved books, violence seems to be very acceptable as entertainment. Try telling that to an assault victim's next of kin.

Not only are the killings disturbingly graphic, they're frequently incidental to the plot. It's as if the deaths have no importance other than the fact that they're exciting to look at. That's certainly a good reason to depict a fellow human being getting shot full of holes (or stabbed, or annihilated, or decapitated, etc...), isn't it? Murder is the most serious of all crimes and should not be thrown into a story just for the hell of it. Villains routinely talk about "destroying" the hero because that's what villains do. Are there any bad persons who stop and think about taking a life before they pull the trigger? When a person is killed, a great many people are affected. Spouses, children, business partners, even mailmen and hairdressers.

Our heroes should respond to all news reports about murder. If they don't, they aren't real heroes.

Criminal motivation is also not properly addressed in comic books. If you have the opportunity to listen to most criminals you will find that they all seem to share the common fear of being trapped by circumstances that have pre-determined a less-than-favorable set of circumstances for them to follow. Some don't see a future for themselves, while others are filled with hate and anger. There are reasons for their behavior, and for their alienation. This cannot be said of most villains in comics. Villainy is a great plot device, easily written in by an unskilled hand but requiring a true artisan to make sense of its senselessness. In an industry dominated by editors with barely enough facial hair to cover a pimple, how can we expect mature answers to anything, much less, violence. Show me one editor who has been through Viet Nam and I'll eat my words ...along with my left shoe.

We know that "MAJOR SOCIOPATH" wants to dominate the world, he said as much through several issues, but what made him so anti-social? If our daring, costumed hero or heroine knew the answer to that question, they might be able to put a stop to the scheme.

Heroes all have their reasons for wearing colorful costumes and chasing criminals. Even

BACK ISSUES

Issue 1: Reactor's Donna Matrix Mike Saenz on CD-Rom & comics. Hangin' out with Jimmy Palmiotti & Joe Quesada.

Issue 2: Sheldon Moldoff, Alex Ross: Insider's look at MARVELS. Creating comics : pros talk.

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Superman is motivated to do what's right as a result of a decent upbringing. This makes perfect sense. At the same time, would a person like Electro turn to crime just because he can shoot lightning bolts from his fingers? Why isn't he helpful with his powers? At the very least, he could have been self serving without turning to crime. Had he already been a criminal before he gained the power of electricity? If so, why? How many times had he been arrested? Is there anyone in his past who could help him reform? A person with the true abilities of an Electro could -far more easily- turn to stardom by being an asset to mankind, rather than plot to overthrow it. At the very least, there might be product endorsements that would make him a very happy camper.

All of these possibilities could be used for a very interesting story. The only comic book villains who come to mind with this kind of examination of their background are Marvel's Sandman and Doctor Doom. There are more, and there is always room for more. This certainly does not mean that all of the established villains should suddenly become law-abiding people. I just want to know why criminals do what they do. What causes someone's child to become a bully? How could he bring himself to beat up his or her classmates? After they grow up, how could they turn to violent crime? Why would they threaten someone with a gun and, God forbid, use it to take a person's life?

Perhaps it *is* time to reexamine what we permit as entertainment. Maybe we should force writers to pass a simple test before they are allowed to "go pro": show us both the usual violent approach and also show how a rational person would solve the problem. Would that stifle creativity? No, my friend, that might just force some of the best of it out.

-blair kramer
FANBOY!

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STYLE

THE ESSENTIALS

Cool is defined by style, or in some cases, the ability to thumb one's nose at the superfluousness of trends. Nobody has the style of Tony Bennett and woe to all who dare to ignore him. Here is a voice that my father's father listened to and yet, he sounds better today than ever before, perhaps by maintaining his dignity doing the styles that he does best and blowing off anything else. I remember the Bennett album cover by artist Bob Peak in an attempt to put him in flairs and "mod". The cover art couldn't define Tony's soul, but damn near came close. Here is a guy with a whiskey-sour, smoke-filled-nightclub set of pipes as well as a vision of how to shape a tune into his own piece of his soul and he can't be touched. Even Sinatra listens to Bennett. It's clear that this is the voice of experience and with it, some rite of passage that real men need to hear and recognize. Bennett hit a nerve with his 1992 Grammy winner Perfectly Frank which paid homage to Sinatra with a stripped down combo (The Ralph Sharon Trio) and absolutely no studio tricks or mixes. This stuff was straight, no-chaser. It was what it feels like to be a man, not a little boy. It smacked of heartbreak and pain and melodies that would make Tom Waites humble. With the release of Steppin' Out, Bennett once again pays homage to a great untouchable talent: Fred Astare and the music that was written for him. Once again, the Ralph Sharon Trio plays clean jazz, as crisp as it comes in 1959, if you're lucky enough to find a joint at 3 AM that has a band like this. This CD is great; every song is classic and not one of them is so much of a standard that it's been beaten to death. This is great stuff for anybody, any age. We don't become our fathers, we become someone else's fathers and just because we have an X-Men toy in our pocket and Steppin' Out on the CD player doesn't mean we can't enjoy them both.

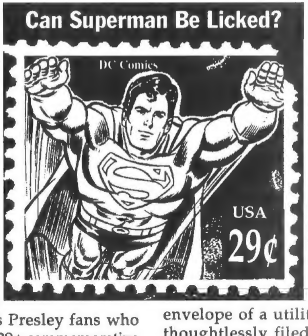
The question is posed upon occasion: what 10 records would you take with you to a desert island? I thought I pretty well had a list downpat until Columbia started tweaking their digital equipment again and produced a whole new line of classics from Bat Out Of Hell to Aerosmith's library to Johnny Mathis. It is an absolute essential to any would-be romantic that their library should contain some Mathis and this is the absolute best, bar none. Great music is timeless and fills our imaginations with dreams and tears and want and promises and we crave it when it's good. Nobody can melt a heart like Mathis and millions of albums later, he still enthralls us all. When Columbia digitally remastered Johnny Mathis for their 4 CD set The Music Of Johnny Mathis/A Personal Collection, they let Mathis do the choosing. What you get is 86 digitally cleaned up, remixed and remastered songs that transcend time and space and are the only true aphrodisiac that 20th Century man can conjour up. True, he's not likely to be heard on any "killer-B" FM station, but it's a good bet that you were conceived during or because of his music, and fanboys knowing a true classic can easily recognize this as a true essential for any collection. Let's face it, who can envision anybody twenty years from now popping in a tape of "Whoops, There it is" and whispering, "Everytime I hear that oldie, I think of you..." Flash Of Two Worlds stole its title from the DC silver age classic and it reflects clearly on that era by making great sounds that the original Airplane would've sold their souls to emulate. The band is Art Thieves and they turn terrific covers of Chuck Berry's Promised Land, PF Sloan's Secret Agent Man and a handful of others. Their original material is slick and honest, ranging from Words for Snow to the country send-up Elvis On Velvet. Cassette: 708-386-0790.

JANIS Janis Joplin Columbia/Legacy is a 3 cd set of the late singer's outtakes and some hits, though no mention is made of her bands and their contributions to her success. An accompanying book is filled with photos -all reproduced with the worst use of color and design I've ever seen for a package of this price. Their Art Director needed a lot more real experience outside of school to tackle a project like this, and that goes double for their projects director. Why didn't they include Bob Crumb's cover art for Cheap Thrills? Where are the A sides and solid-takes? Not here, bro. The rock icon who set afire a generation is treated with the ultimate insult: she is trivialized.

If the UK can print a postage stamp with a flashing grin of their beloved Queen, why couldn't the good old U. S. of A. have one of "the King?"

Well, so be it--thanks to thousands of loyal, die-hard (and those who refuse to believe he's gone!) Elvis Presley fans who voted "yes" to a 29¢ commemorative keepsake of an all time great rock and roll legend. The image of "young Elvis" will make and complete stamp collections everywhere.

So tell us, is it finally time to commemorate another legendary figure, that of a character so universal, so timeless, he was created to exist for decades only to be killed off until he could be resurrected and rediscovered again? Comic fans, we're not talking 'bout Jesus here, we're talking Superhero, as in Clark Kent... Kryptonite...and DC comics. We're talking about the one and only--SUPERMAN!



Should Superman, the classic all-American Superhero, be immortalized on a mere 1/2" square perforated piece of gummed-back paper, to be collected and hinged into an album, or worse than that, adhered to the envelope of a utility bill and then thoughtlessly filed away into the circular bin? And who would get the honorable job of creating it? Guice, or maybe Bogdanove, or even Jurgens? Or perhaps it would be a Kirby or Curt Swan? FANBOY! wants to know! Is a U.S. postage stamp worthy of the image of this 20th Century icon? We would like you to tell us . . .let your loyalty be the judge!

(Pull out your red kryptonite pencils and write us your opinion. Mail your input to: Fanboy! Stamp, PO Box 56086, Chicago, IL 60656. All respondents will receive various collectible goodies via snail-mail.)

E-MAIL

SUBJ: SEXISM ETC.
TO: FANBOY

YOU MAY FIND THAT TALKING CANDIDLY ABOUT HOW MUCH SEXISM THERE IS IN COMIC BOOKS GOES OVER LIKE KITTY LITTER FLAMBE AT THE FAMILY PICNIC. I'M A COMIC STRIP STRIP ARTIST, WHICH PUTS ME ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRACKS FROM COMIC BOOK PEOPLE, BUT I KNOW WHEREOF I SPEAK. I WORK NEXT TO A COMIC BOOK STORE, AND THE CROWD IN THERE IS DEFINITELY OF THE ADOLESCENT MALE PERSUASION. NOT TO SAY THEY'RE STUPID — I DON'T THINK THEY ARE. I JUST DON'T THINK THEY'RE ALL THAT INTERESTED IN HOW WOMEN REALLY LOOK AND ACT. WHO WOULD BE WHEN YOU CAN LOOK AT KANESSA VILTURPIN, EVIL (BUT PROMISCUOUS) SEX GODDESS OF THE LESSER GALAXIES? IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOMEN ARE STARTING TO BUY, THEN *SOMEBODY* BETTER FIGURE OUT HOW TO DRAW BREASTS AND HIPS FROM *THIS* PLANET.

E-MAIL

DEAR MARK BRAUN,
HOW'S IT GOING? SORRY ABOUT SENDING THIS "SNAILMAIL" BUT MY MAC DOESN'T HAVE A MODEM.
I PICKED UP THE FIRST ISSUE OF FANBOY SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF YOUR QUESADA INTERVIEW (DID YOU SEE MY QUESADA INTERVIEW IN -I THINK IT WAS THE FOURTH ISSUE OF- THE BRITISH FANZINE COMICS WORLD?) BUT STUCK AROUND AND READ THE RET OF IT AND GREATLY ENJOYED IT; FROM THE QUESTIONS YOU ASK YOUR INTERVIEWEES TO THE SIMPLE BUT ELEGANT DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF THE MAGAZINE. HE MAG SKATES A GOOD LINE 'TWIXT WIZARD AND THE COMICS JOURNAL.
YOURS,
S.MA.
WEST WALES,
UNITED KINGDOM

SUBJECT: JILL THOMPSON: JILL'S GREAT!
PLEASE TELL JILL I THINK SHE IS SUPREMELY TALENTED. COULD YOU ASK HER HOW AND WHEN SHE GOT INTO COMICS - I'M CURIOUS SINCE IT'S SUCH A "GUY" THING. DOES SHE SEE THE BIZ OPENING UP TO WOMEN NOWADAYS?
THANKS-CINDY
PS: LOVED YOUR MOLDOFF PIECE!

TO FANBOY

I'M STILL A "CLOSET" COMIC FAN. THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT AROUND WHO THINK YOU ARE PRETTY WEIRD IF YOU ARE AN ADULT WHO IS INTO COMICS. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I WOULD BE MORTIFIED IF MY BRIEFCASE BROKE ONE DAY ON THE TRAIN HOME FROM THE LOOP AND ALL MY COMICS FELL OUT!
THANKS - ART

JUST THE OTHER DAY I WAS WATCHING THE NEWS AND SAW A REPORT ON CARTOON VIOLENCE ABOUT BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD BUT THEY ALSO MENTIONED AND SHOWED SCENES FROM A JAPANESE CARTOON CALLED **AKIRA** THE SCENE SHOWED A MAN COUGHING UP LARGE AMOUNTS OF BLOOD AND THEN BEING BLOWN AWAY BY ABOUT 5 MACHINE GUNS.SO IS A FORK STUCK IN BUTTHEADS HEAD ANY WORSE? I THINK NOT, SO TO ALL YOU PARENTS, CARTOON VIOLENCE CAN BE A LOT WORSE THAN IT ALREADY IS.

FANBOY REPLIES

AS A PARENT, I'M AWARE OF REGULATING WHAT SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT BE SHOWN IN OUR HOUSE. CORRECT THAT -MY HOUSE: MY OLDEST DAUGHTER HAS SEEN **AKIRA** AS WELL AS OTHER JAPANIMATION; I JUST TALK THEM OUT WITH HER, EXPLAINING THAT IT MAY OR MAY NOT BE RIGHT AND THAT SHE IS THE FINAL JUDGE OF ITS APPROPRIATENESS. AS A COMIC ARTIST, I'VE DRAWN A FEW "FUNNY" VIOLENT AND/OR SEXIST PIECES THAT COULD'VE USED SOME EDITING. NOWADAYS, I'M MUCH MORE SELECTIVE OF WORK I ACCEPT.

SUBJ: VIOLENT MANGA
FROM: BRADW8
VIOLENCE IN JAPANESE COMICS (MANGA) IS FAR BLOODIER THAN MOST U.S. COMICS STORIES. SOME OF THE WOUNDS LOOK LIKE GRAY'S ANATOMY. AND THESE BOOKS ARE SOLD TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KIDS.
THE JAPANESE SUBSCRIBE TO THE CATHARSIS THEORY — THEIR ENTERTAINMENT IS SO BLOODY BECAUSE THEY, THEMSELVES, ARE SO REPRESSED. (THE FREDDY MOVIES AND THEIR ILK ALL DID TREMENDOUS BUSINESS IN JAPAN.) THE JAPANESE DEPEND ON THEIR POPULAR FICTION TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS OF RAGE BUT THERE ARE THOSE (MOSTLY TROUBLE-MAKING FURRINERS) WHO CLAIM THAT THE JAPANESE ARE PLENTY VIOLENT, BUT THE VIOLENCE IS HIDDEN BY AN UNWRITTEN CONSPIRACY. SEVERAL WHITE WOMEN IN JAPAN HAVE CLAIMED TO GET NO SATISFACTION FROM THE JAPANESE POLICE WHEN CLAIMING RAPE.

FROM: HARDEYES
THE CARTOONS IN JAPAN ARE A LOT MORE INTELLIGENT AS WELL. I'LL ADMIT THAT SOME ARE MINDLESS VIOLENCE OR SEXUALLY ORIENTATED, BUT AT LEAST THEY'RE STRAIGHT UP ABOUT IT. LOTS OF THE ANIMATION FEATURES PLOTS A LOT BETTER THAN R-RATED MOVIES OVER HERE. PEOPLE DIE FOR A **REASON**, AND NOT ONLY ALL THAT, BUT IT SHOWS WHAT REALISTICALLY HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET SHOT, STABBED OR WHATEVER. KIDS OVER HERE GROW UP THINKING, YOU JUST BANDAGE IT AND YOU'RE OK.

FROM: **SYSOP**
SUBJECT: RE: MARVEL'S **MARVELS** SERIES
WHAT HAVE WE COME TO WHEN THE EVENING NEWS IS WORRIED ABOUT WONDER WOMAN'S THONG OUTFIT AND OUR SUPERHEROS ARE NAMED PHIL. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GOOD NAMES LIKE "DOOM" OR "THE RED SKULL"; NAMES WE COULD DEPEND ON TO MEAN TROUBLE AND EVIL. NO OFFENSE TO ANY PHILS OUT THERE! *THE SYS*

ALL LETTERS ARE TAKEN PRETTY MUCH "AS-IS" FROM VARIOUS BOARDS AS WELL AS THE GOOD OLD U.S. MAIL

Face Front, Pilgrims! Here's A Sneak Peek From Within The House Of Ideas

MARVEL COMICS '94 Preview

Scheduled for March, the **X-Men Wedding Album** graces a cover by Rich Bennett and traces Jean and Scott over their 30-year courtship. There is no truth to the rumor that it will come in a white album cover with a serial number and lyrics to *Helter Skelter*. The four-issue limited series **Jean/Scott Honeymoon** features Scott Lobdell & Tom Lyle and puts our lovebirds in the clutches of kidnappers from the future, as well as revealing discoveries about Askani.

Riftworld pokes fun at the industry that Stan Lee helped create. Fans of Lee will be happy to have their Marchin' Society leader back in action again.

The Phantom, Lee Falk's classic strip gets updated in a 3-issue series by Dave

de Vries and Glen Lumsden. Watch for projects between Marvel and King Features including **Buck Rogers, Prince Valiant,** and **Mandrake the Magician.**

The Foreigner continues his quest to destroy Silver Sable, while she attempts to uncover the truth about what happened to her father and find out if he's still alive. Marvel promises a lot of bang starting in **Silver Sable #25,** this April.

Blaze cuts his connection with Ghost Rider and gets his own book, in June. With the help of his friends at the Quentin Carnival, John Blaze sets out to fix up the supernatural problems that destroyed his life in the first place. Written by Wolvy artist Larry Hama and lovingly penciled by Henry Martinez with inks by Bud LaRosa.

Black Cat teams up with Spidey in a 4-issue series due in May. Terry Kavanagh is scheduled to write it. Cat gets hired by the Morelle Corporation to recover a valuable

known only as the "Chimera" and gets caught up in industrial espionage. Her low-cut costume and "fun-loving personality" guarantees more happy fanboys than a dozen issues of Betty and Veronica.

© Marvel Comics Group

Rick Jones ties the knot with Marlo in **Hulk** 418, due out in April and penned by the guy who bested Todd in Phili, Peter David. Watch for Rick to try and explain where he's been all night while hangin' out with his no-good pal, the Hulkster. Likewise, the **Hulk Annual** hits in April complete with wedding photos...and, ah, some mashin', bashin' action by Mr. Green...

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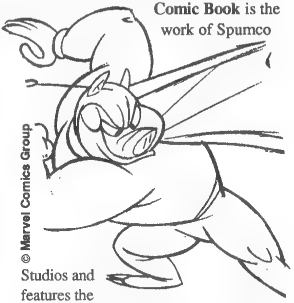
Proving that the butt you cover may be your own: **Mode Extreme** is written by Sarah Byam and carries Clive Barker's Razorline a few steps farther in proving a very good training ground for new talent. Gang violence erupts in Washington, DC when a monstrous being known as the Sickle appears to make things better...and worse. He, along with an inter-dimensional rift, cause a couple of gang leaders to exchange body parts and meld with the very weapons that threaten to destroy their community. Kinda hard to hate if your enemy has your arms, heart and lord-knows-what-else. With that dilemma outstanding, the gangsters set out to find a way back into their former selves, and clean up the local problems at the same time. Watch for it in June.


© Marvel Comics Group

Comic Book is the work of Spumco Studios and features the off-beat adventures of Jimmy the Hapless Boy, He-Hog and George Liquor. Also features reprints of Marvel's Golden Age funny books with all-new dialog inserted where the sun don't shine.

Punisher: A Man Named Frank. June. Buscema. 48 pages. *'Nuff said!*

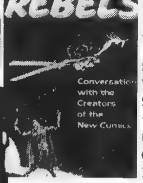
© Marvel Comics Group

Essential Reading

Life Before And After Monty Python: The Solo Flights of the Flying Circus
($15.95 St. Martin's Press)

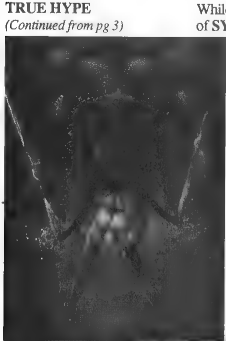
Life before and after Spam, Spam, Spam, eggs and Spam was a wonderful mixture of projects for the Monty Pythons and this is the one book that covers it perfectly. Written by long-time Python chronicler Howard Johnson (yeah, the same guy who hosts Moondog's Pop Culture Radio Hour reviewed earlier on in this issue), this volume lists casts, scripts, dates and info like a true reference book. Johnson did his homework and came up shining. To his credit, he included personal notes only as sidebar material, separating opinion from data and any writer humble enough to put his personal opinions last deserves respect, if only for that. Littered with personal photos, this is a real keeper for any film trivia buff, especially if you're into "something completely different".

Comic Book Rebels
Stanley Wiater and Steve Bissette
$13.95 Primus



Steve "Swamp Thing" Bissette and Stan Wiater talk shop with an array of talent from Rich Corben to Colleen Doran. Next to Scott McCloud's Understanding Comics, this is required reading for the trade and ought to scare the crap out of anybody who thinks it's glamorous to be tied to a drawing board.

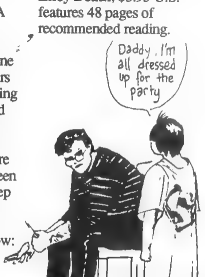
TRUE HYPE
(Continued from pg 3)



SYPHONS © Marvel © 1995 DC Entertainment Corporation Licensing by Valiant.com All Rights Reserved.

While we applaud the return of **SYPHONS** in the form of a 3-parter by Mark Beachum, the series features more T & A than most parents would dare tolerate. Several years ago, one of Alex Ross's covers to Terminator: Burning Earth became legend due to a subliminal message. Syphons cover 3 is shown here and maybe we've been playing too many Zep lps backwards, but where *is* this lady's mouth at? From Now: spring '94.

Favorite pick from Dark Horse for 1st quarter of '94: **Eddie Campbell's Dance of Lifey Death**, $3.95 U.S. features 48 pages of recommended reading.



It's all very clear, in fact, *crystal* clear– Jill Thompson is truly one of the hippest, most mysteriously attractive and imaginative artists around today. At age 27, Jill appears to be on the go and very much together with her life as a comic book artist. One easily gets the impression her work is her priority. Although she can laugh and joke along with the rest of us, Jill takes what she does very seriously.

Jill invited me to her apartment on Chicago's northwest side where she has lived since she returned from Ohio. She surrounds herself with warmth and beauty, and creatively decorates her home in good taste. Subtle earthtone colors and elements from nature accentuate her down to earth style, as does her skeleton collection. Jill thinks skeletons just look great, and has liked them since she was a child. She tells me Halloween has always been the best time of year for her. My eyes continued to roam. . .she has skeleton trinkets everywhere! The great big one in a cage, sitting on a chair is from her friend Rick, but it's the teapot on her coffee table which stands out in my mind. It's a skull that holds all of her magic pens and pencils. I also notice she's wearing a little silver skeleton earring. "Always," she says, laughing.

Relaxing on her sofa with her 3 cats, Jill described her life and perspectives with exciting detail and zest:

FANBOY: Jill, how old were you when you first started reading comics?

JILL: I would hazard to guess as soon as I could read, I think I was four years old.

FANBOY: What were you reading?

JILL: Well, we were reading a thing in pre-kindergarten called Zip the Dog that had cartoons in it. And once that started I remember going on to reading Peanuts and Peanuts compilations, the big books, newspaper strips, and Archie comics for quite a long time.

FANBOY: So is that when you started buying comic books?

STILL

Photo by Ron Forsythe

JILL

A Candid Conversation With The Voice Of The Orchid, Jill Thompson

The FANBOY! Interview By Crystal MonAmour

JILL: I didn't necessarily start going out buying them, they just seemed to be around. I would go to garage sales and buy them--I remember this one garage sale as like, the mother of all garage sales because they had really good stuff and just had to get rid of it, and there were boxes and boxes of old 1940's and 1950's Archie comics. I remember I got a couple of boxes for like $3.00 or something, and hauled them down the alley home.

FANBOY: Did you also read Superhero comics?

JILL: As I got a little older I started reading Superheroes. I think it was just by accident, really. I remember that, I'd look through my box of comics and I'd recognize all the covers--ah, that Archie, oh, I know that one, and yeah, I read that one and then I came across a Superhero comic and went, "I've never read this one before" and I read it.

FANBOY: And it sparked a new interest for you.

JILL: Oh, I was hooked immediately. I went along and got into that whole Marvel thing.

FANBOY: Briefly tell me about your first published work.

JILL: My first published work was in a black and white anthology called Just Imagine Comix and Stories, published by Dennis & Virginia Meisinger. It was a four page fill-in. They were four pages short for their issue and they had this really goofy character that Tom Artis created called Banana Man.

FANBOY: Did he look like a banana?

JILL: Well, he had this huge, inflatable banana on his head and these big, yellow bell-bottom boots and he threw bananas at you, and he had big yellow gloves, you know, everything was really campy and flared. And they just made up four pages of banana jokes and kind of strung them together.

FANBOY: How old were you?

JILL: I was 15 or 16 at the time.

FANBOY: Tell me about your passions.

JILL: Wow, this is like a girlie magazine interview! My passions...

FANBOY: What do you feel. What do you breathe. What do you love to do most? Remember, this is an interview with Crystal MonAmour.

JILL: This *is* an interview with Crystal MonAmour! This is a great interview because I've never been asked that question. Mostly, I breathe in cat hair at home! I can't help it--they'll cut me open to do my autopsy and go "We won't have to do a thing, she's already stuffed!"

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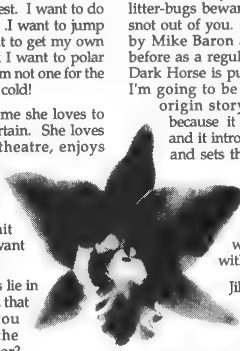
What do I like to do most? I suppose that depends on the time of day. I love to draw, mostly, I mean, that's a pretty boring answer. . .but, it's something I've always done, so it's what I like to do most. I like to try new things, I like to meet people, and be out there and experience things I've never done before. I would love to live life to it's fullest. I want to do things that are exciting. . .I want to jump out of an airplane, I want to get my own parachute. I don't think I want to polar bear swim–no, because I'm not one for the cold weather–I'm always cold!

(Another thing Jill told me she loves to do is perform and entertain. She loves doing improvisation theatre, enjoys being in front of an audience, and the sound of applause. Unfortunately, her busy schedule doesn't permit the time but she does want to get back into it again.)



Fanboy: Do your talents lie in originating the character, that is penciling, or do you enjoy inking over the pencils? Do you ever color?

Jill: I don't color the comics that I draw. When I do painted work it's fully painted, so you don't have any inking there. I'm a talented penciller, although I love to do it all.

Fanboy: We see that!

Jill: On this Badger project that I'm going to do for Dark Horse, I'm going to pencil it *and* ink it, which is a lot more control than I've usually had, and I'm very anxious about that. And then I will paint the covers so I get to do two things that I've not been able to do before.

Fanboy: When does the series come out?

Jill: The first issue is supposed to hit the stands July 19th.

Fanboy: We'll be looking forward to it. Tell us briefly what Badger is all about.

Jill: Well, for people who don't know what Badger is, the Badger is a guy named Norbert Sykes who was a tunnel rat in Vietnam. He was also an abused child, so he's a multiple personality and one of his personalities happens to be a vigilante superhero. He's not super powered or anything, he just reacts to the "urban crime" in his neighborhood. You know, he jumps on jay walkers, and litter-bugs beware, 'cause he'll beat the snot out of you. It's a really great story by Mike Baron and it was published before as a regular monthly series, but Dark Horse is putting it out again, and I'm going to be telling the four issue origin story which I really like, because it tells all about who he is and it introduces all the characters and sets the stage for the regular monthly series, which will be drawn by somebody else.

Fanboy: Which female writers have you worked with in the past?

Jill: Mindy Newell.

Fanboy: That's it?

Jill: That's it. I worked with her on Wonder Woman for a while–I think it was actually only one, or a couple of issues.

Fanboy: Is there any particular woman you'd like to work with? Perhaps Anne Rice on Vampire Chronicles?

Jill: I think if someone was given the time they needed to do the Vampire Chronicles correctly, they could be done.

Fanboy: Aesthetically, they're not correct?

Jill: In certain areas they seem to be pushed, or rushed for deadlines sake. I can look at stuff and see that now. Colleen Doran did a beautiful Master of Rampling Gate[1], which is a story by Anne Rice that Innovation also has the rights to. Hers was incredible; I would love to see Colleen Doran do Interview With A Vampire, and just all of them. Or, break them up and have artists do their favorite stories from it–make it look like

[1] The Ultimate Dracula

a huge graphic novel, do certain chapters. It would be good to see different peoples interpretations of it.

Fanboy: I'd like to talk about salary scales between men and women in the industry. What do you currently get paid per page?

Jill: I'm not comfortable talking about my page rate.

Fanboy: OK. Do men get paid more than women?

Jill: Not necessarily. There are so few women that I can't make a fair judgement. I know what I get paid in comparison to some of my friends, and I've asked certain people what they make but sometimes they're penciling and inking, so it's all different. I know when I started out at DC, they started everybody out at something like $85.00 a page for penciling, it might be more now. Whenever I meet artists, especially if I like their work, we do end up talking about page rates, and I know Lee Moder got paid much more than I did on Wonder Woman.

Fanboy: Really?

Jill: I think that he may have been better than me when he started working for them. I know it also really depends on how fast you are. You get a raise every six months, but if you're knocking that book out like crazy and keeping your eye on the schedule, you'll get raises quicker.

Fanboy: But is speed preferred over accuracy?

Jill: For me, no. For companies, yes. Look at the enormous amount of shit that's out there, pardon my French! Shite, that's better–a Vertigo word, shite. I mean the amount of shit that's out there these days proves that speed is the highest sought after commodity, and that's terrible. And not everybody works for the same type of company. I know people that work for smaller companies and get paid less, some people work for a smaller page rate and then get paid a larger royalty. I know that some people at Marvel working on X Books were getting paid less per page than I was doing Sandman, but they were also getting 5-figure royalty checks. So that's where it was all made up.

Fanboy: Do you think that a woman artist can define a female character better than a man could?

Jill: No, that's stereotyping and saying that there could never be an instance where a man could write or draw a realistic woman character, which isn't true. It's like saying that I could not draw or write a male character. I think that it just has to be a strong character. If you're a good writer or artist you should be able to interpret a male or female, no matter what your sex is.

When I was working on Wonder Woman, I remember that everyone was making a big deal about the fact that there was an issue written by Mindy Newell, a third of it was penciled by me, a third of it was penciled by Cynthia Martin, and a third of it was penciled by Colleen Doran, and everyone was making the biggest whip about it because OH, WONDER WOMAN IS FINALLY BEING WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY A WOMAN, IT'S GOING TO BE SUCH A GOOD BOOK NOW, and it wasn't.

Fanboy: A liberated Wonder Woman!

Jill: That's what they were expecting, and it wasn't. Not for the lack of trying, it's the character instead that restricts the things you can do with that character.

Fanboy: She was always a very cool character.

Jill: Yeah, she was a sharp woman, but the situations that she's been in in the past 6 or 7 years have been pretty stupid. I do like the stuff that Bill Loebs and Lee Moder are doing, it's actually fun super heroes. I don't read them all, but I look through the stuff and I like what I read.

Fanboy: What do you read besides what you're working on?

Jill: Gosh, I don't have much time to do

it--I read Cud, by Terry LaBan, it's one of my favorite books--I've got these issues that look like they're from the 40's because I've read them so many times! I read Hate, and Eight Ball and Love and Rockets--I read Hellblazer and Shade, the Changing Man. I still pick up an occasional issue of Archie now and then...Omaha, the Cat Dancer, Bone. I can't think of all of them, they vary so much.

Fanboy: We know that there are comics out there for everyone... imaginative stories of adventure, romance, fantasy and humor. Stories of triumphs and the ongoing search for truth. Jill, would you say more males read comic books than women, because maybe females seem to think that comics are only aimed towards a male audience?

Jill: Yes, and I don't know why it's true, but it is true.

Fanboy: Twelve year old girls and 35 year old women read comics. Do they prefer a certain style?

Jill: I think they prefer a certain style, unless you find some out of the ordinary women and young girls. I think its great that women *are* reading comics and it *is* unusual, but I remember when I was younger I loved Superhero comics and I don't know *what* it was about me that was different than other girls but I *always* liked them. I *never* thought they were stupid--I thought they were great. I don't know if it was because that's what I wanted to do for a living but I thought they were great.

Fanboy: It could have been a harbinger for you.

Jill: I suppose. I know that I've grown out of the Marvel Superheroes. The only thing that's going to make me buy Marvel Comics is going to be *Marvels*. Just looking at Alex Ross's stuff is fantastic and he makes it real for me again, and back then it was real and I believed it all could happen.

Fanboy: Let's talk about villains. The female villain can be as amazingly sexy and feminine as the heroine.

Jill: They tend to be sexier.

Fanboy: Does this attribute to her success as a character?

Jill: Yeah, I think it does. They tend to be stronger because most of them have little or no conscience. I think that's what villains have in the first place, little or no conscience, but there's always something about the power that you identify with. I wish I could be like that! I know I can't be like that, without conscience, I've tried. For example, I've tried to be the bitch, you know, like in relationships and stuff. It's like, I bet I could go out with two guys at once, but I can't do it because there's always one guy that I prefer and I don't want to call the other guy because I don't want him to feel the way I felt before--where just one call from somebody would make you go "Oh, gee, I'm so happy he called," and would keep me going all week. I don't want to make another person feel that, so I have to choose and usually it's bad, anyway.

Fanboy: If you could create your own superhero or heroine, would he or she be the typical "robotech male" or voluptuous babe in breast plates, and what would this character represent?

Jill: Well, I'm not sure if I'd ever create a super hero or super heroine, but I'm sure I'd create someone who had extraordinary powers. They may not wear a big costume, and they would be real people. They'd represent what happens when you totally find yourself higher on the evolutionary scale than everybody else. I think if I was to create a bunch of super heroes they would have telekinetic and psychic powers because I just think that would be the next step. Or they would have their mind expanded somehow.

Fanboy: What type of crimes would they solve?

Jill: If I was to create a story with a number of characters who had special abilities it

would be more how they relate to their powers and the world around them, afterwards. I don't think they'd necessarily be fighting a villain of any kind. It would be a story of how they would cope with the fact that they were the only powered people like this in the world.

Fanboy: How important is it to create a character who appears to be sexually appealing or erotic looking?

Jill: I don't think it's that important. I don't think all characters have to be the ideal human, although most Superhero comics are that way. You can draw a comic that has characters that are the idealized person, but if they don't have interesting words coming out of their head, it's not a good comic.

Fanboy: Guess it's up to the writer, then.

Jill: Both the writer and the artist. You have to make those characters human to make the story a drama or a comedy or whatever it needs to be to tell a good story.

Fanboy: Does sex sell?

Jill: Sex sells comics, sex sells anything--but I don't think you *need* sex to sell a story. I pride myself on doing comics that have all kinds of different people in there and not all of them are ideally shaped, they're more real.

Fanboy: Like Delirium or Black Orchid. She's great.

Jill: Black Orchid is the most idealized out of the characters, but she's not large chested, and she's tall, and she's also alien.

Fanboy: She still looks very elegant and feminine.

Jill: She's feminine, but I don't feel that you have to have those measurements or those looks to be attractive. Hell, I think Lyle Lovett is really attractive and I get really pissed off at everyone just blatantly calling it Beauty and the Beast when Julia Roberts married him. I thought, you know, half the people who are typing these articles probably are not *as attractive* as Lyle Lovett and they have a lot of nerve saying he's not attractive or there's nothing Julia Roberts would have found attractive about him. It's a person's personality that is attractive first, I think. Can a person make you laugh, do they have a skill, are they easy going, are they ok with themselves?

Fanboy: These sound like your dating preferences, Jill.

Jill: They are my preferences, but I also think they're human preferences. Even after a while, if a guy's seeing a woman who looks darn good, but doesn't have a thought in her head, he might screw her until he's tired and keep doing it, but he may only use her for that and he may talk to somebody else.

Fanboy: I'd hope she's enjoying him. . .

Jill: Yeah, I'd hope that too, but she probably can't think that much -or do two things at the same time!

Fanboy: Neil Gaiman says an artist defines the story and he won't write a script unless he knows who's drawing it.

Jill: This is true.

Fanboy: When Neil asked you what you wanted to draw you said, "Anything that isn't Wonder Woman." What or who do you prefer to draw?

Jill: Call me crazy, I prefer to draw characters and stories that interest me.

Fanboy: In other words, if a writer suggests a story and you don't like it or the material doesn't interest you, you'll turn it down?

Jill: I know it will be excruciating to do. I'll still be able to do a good job on it, but it will just suck all the life out of me and it will eventually become late because I will stare at the paper and not know what to do because I get no pictures in my head. Sandman was a wonderful thing--I would read the script that I got and in my head I would see the page I was going to draw and I would just start drawing it from top to bottom. With Wonder Woman I would read the script, I

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would read the script, I would read the script, and I would see nothing. I would do layouts, I would re-do the layouts and I'd do some thumbnails, and maybe some of it would work. I mean, it just took a lot more out of me.

Fanboy: Sounds like you're saying it was forced.

Jill: It was forced, and I wouldn't want to tell a story that's forced. I know I'm doing a story I really like when I can start on page 1 and work to page 24.

Fanboy: In what kind of a time frame?

Jill: With Sandman, I was doing stuff in 3 to 3-1/2 weeks. Neil was not very pleased with that because he was always a couple of pages ahead of me in the script.

Fanboy: So, couldn't Neil keep up with you!

Jill: Well, no--it was a race, he never got a chance to take a breath and I'd call him up and go, 'Neil, I need some more pages,' and he'd say, "What, already?" because I guess he had worked with artists in the past who said they'll have it done in about 3-1/2 weeks and then they'd turn it in in 5 weeks, so he'd have time to get ahead. I would turn it in in 3-1/2 weeks not because I was forced or because I made myself work, but because it just flowed out of me and I was happy to do it. I had all these ideas and they just came out and I was really excited about it. I want to do stories that will give me that feeling because I'll produce my best work and that will be beneficial to everybody.

Fanboy: Neil suggests in an interview with Kim Thompson that Black Orchid was going to be an ecological, pacifist, feminist fable. Could you define Neil Gaiman as a feminist?

Jill: (Pause) He's a humanist--I would say he's a feminist.

Fanboy: Are you?

Jill: If you mean am I a feminist because I believe in strong, independent, free thinking, responsible women, then yes, I am. I get really upset over the war between the sexes because I think there are common courtesies that should be

"I believe in strong, independent, free-thinking, responsible women"

allowed men and women as people, and then there are just special things you can do for people to make them feel good, and if that's considered chivalrous on a man's part, if he's going to hold a door open for a woman or if he compliments her, those are nice things, but a woman can also do that to a man. Right now it's so hard to define what the line is between a compliment and sexual harassment, or what is being nice and what is being forward. Sometimes I sit on my couch and do a lot of armchair law and I solve the world's problems as soon as a newsstory comes on TV. In a sentence I will solve the problem because I just get really upset at the way the media plays things up and influences peoples' decisions and minds. I don't know what a feminist is anymore. Is a feminist supposed to burn her bra and hate men and not wear makeup, because that's not

me. I like men very much, and I wear makeup and I like attention and I don't think those are bad things.

People ask the question in interviews, "What is it like being a woman in comics?" There are so few women in comics I don't know exactly how to respond to that. I'm not uncomfortable with it. I consider myself a likable person who produces good work, just like the other likable people who produce good work.

Fanboy: How could you encourage women to go after dreams they have through a society overrun with prejudicial and chauvinistic attitudes?

"I don't think women should take no for an answer"

Jill: Don't limit yourself. I never thought I couldn't do something--I guess I never had any obstacles. I don't think women should take no for an answer.

I think women tend to limit themselves in a lot of ways. I was on a panel of women cartoonists in London for the UK Comic Art Convention this past September and although I love Trina Robbins dearly I would have to express myself in the exact opposite way with what she said. She kept repeating that she can't draw "boy comics" and I felt like I was attacking her through the whole thing because I don't think there are such things as "boy comics." She said the stories she wants to tell are not commercially viable and I think that's bull. I mean, they may not be as commercially lucrative as Superheroes right now, but *nothing* is. This country is dominated by Superheroes and there's no way we're going to break out of it. I think we just have to educate the public to the fact that comics are not a children's media and that you should not be ashamed to be a 35 year old business man sitting on the El reading a comic.

Fanboy: How can a traditionally male dominated industry gear up for more women to enter into this business?

Jill: Men and women, whether they're editors or whatever, should just be objective enough to look for good stories--period, or good art, period. I've seen a lot of dreck by women, I've seen a lot of dreck by men and I don't think just because you're a woman your story or art should be taken ONLY because you're a woman; 'We better hire more women,' that's quota fill.

Fanboy: Wendy Pini (Elfquest) says "Don't be a man, be tough like a man." Any comments on that?

Jill: She does? Wow. I am! (laughs) My friend Ken was with his friend Mark at the Torchlight last Thursday, and I guess Mark told him that he thought I was OK, he liked me because I was "one of the guys." I have my own opinions and I'm not just going to defer to whatever man is around or their opinion because I want one of them to like me. If I have something to say I'm not afraid to say it, although I don't want people to hate me, but who knows. Why should anyone not say what they want to say for fear of somebody else's comment. You shouldn't be a man unless you feel that you've been one all your life--inside, and you need to have that special change. But you should be strong, and why be strong like a man, be strong like a woman.

FANBOY!

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JEDI ENVY

Tony Akins trades his pen for a lightsword and heads on back to space

Tony Akins' Chicago studio stylishly stands across the street from Michael Jordan's restaurant. The area is hot; at that intersection, the chic meet die-hard sports fans. What would any of them say if they knew they were just steps away from the edge of the universe?

Since his arrival on the comics scene, Tony Akins has served time on a number of projects, but the universe really expanded when his story "The Alien" for Dark Horse helped usher in the graphic retelling of a science fiction classic. That led to Aliens: Colonial Marines and helped cement Tony's position as a top artist in imaginative, intricate galactic fantasy. Taking a break to do Ghost of a Chance,an Elementals double-issue for Comico along with Bill Willingham and Neil Trais on inks, Tony found himself offered yet another chance to wander space, this time going to a place "long ago and far, far away". The project: the upcoming Jedi saga for Dark Horse and a chance to once again show off his skills with things alien.

Fanboy: So the next project is going to be a double-issue?

Tony: Yes, a double-issue Tales of the Jedi. My part of the series is a double-issue form Dark Horse, which counts as #6 and 7. It pretty much carries the story line that Tom Veitch has written for issues 1-5.

Fanboy: Where did you come in on the project? How did you get involved? Are there any really sexy stories to it?

Tony: (laughs) Yeah, there could be. The editor I'm working with is Stan Thorsland, who I worked with on Colonial Marines.

Fanboy: The cursed book?

Tony: Well, everybody was having creative conflicts from go and I was worried that they wouldn't want to work with me again. I hadn't talked to him for a couple of months since I finished the last issue (issue 7). I called him up and asked him if he had anything laying around because I was (wrapping up) this graphic novel for Comico with Bill Willingham. Anyway, I told Dan that I was finishing up Ghost of a Chance and if he had a script, let me know. He said he'd talk to the Lucasfilm people because he as going to the San Diego Con. He said he'd show them my samples from Marines and when he got back it was thumbs up. That's as juicy as that story gets (laughs).

Fanboy: By the way, where'd you go to school?

Tony: High school? A private catholic school: De La Salle. I came out of High School in '78 and went to the Art Institute from '78 to '80. I guess I was really impatient there. I took a lot of classes but after two years there I was just so baffled, so completely directionless and so I quit the 'tute and joined the Air Force.

Fanboy: Really?

Tony: (laughs) Yeah.

Fanboy: Explains the physique. I hate to say this too much, but there's a perception of comic artists as not exactly the most

physically fit people in the world. Quesada and I talked about this once. I said there are a lot of little puny guys who you'd just like to whack 'em once and watch 'em crumble.

Tony: (laughs) Well, maybe. I attribute this more to the genetic pool rather than to the service, although I get a lot of harassment from (Steve) Darnall and (Alex) Ross...

Fanboy: They're both in good shape.

Tony: They told me the worst thing they could say about me is, "you're a handsome black man. That's the worst thing anyone can say about you." So, I did the Air Force and came back in '82 and played the disaffected art student who wasn't in school and just kind of hung out for a year until I got my first illustration job which was in advertising. I started working in a Michigan Avenue place called the Storyboard Studio in '83. A friend of mine called and told me about this opening there and I knew that I wanted to get into illustration, so I took it. I didn't have a portfolio, I just had these loose drawings and a sketch pad. I set up an interview with them in the middle of summer at this outdoor cafe downtown (during lunch) and five minutes after pulling out my artwork, the boss spilled a mug of beer across my drawings. It was probably a sign of some sort. I got the job, but everybody had to learn his style of drawing. I started out as a colorist, coloring his work to learn how to do it "the Ortman way." I was replacing a colorist who was leaving and this was Paul Guinan.

Fanboy: From Dark Horse?

Tony: He did Heartbreakers for Dark Horse and worked with me on Colonial Marines.

Fanboy: Pretty prophetic.

Tony: Over the next four years that I was there, Paul would come in when we would get really socked with work. There were only four of us there. Eventually, Lenin Del Sol worked there. He had just come from the Academy (Of Fine Art) and was doing some books for First (Starslayer).

Fanboy: Now, you did work for First, too. Munden's Bar.

Tony: -And Grimjack and two fill-in issues of Nexus.

Fanboy: Which came first? First or Now?

Tony: Now came first...

Fanboy: (both laugh) I have to ask because its a ritual. (more laughter between us)

Tony: ...Eventually, I got paid. One of the people who was hired through the Storyboard Studio was Paul Mounts. Well, I had quit the Studio, everything was just too intense, too insane and I moved to Washington DC just to get the *hell* out of town, but I still kept in contact with everyone and Paul had fallen in with Now Publishing and he was actually the person who got me to draw comic book sample pages for the first time. He had some ideas and I liked working with him and he gave me some mock scripts to work from. I was still kind of stiff; I

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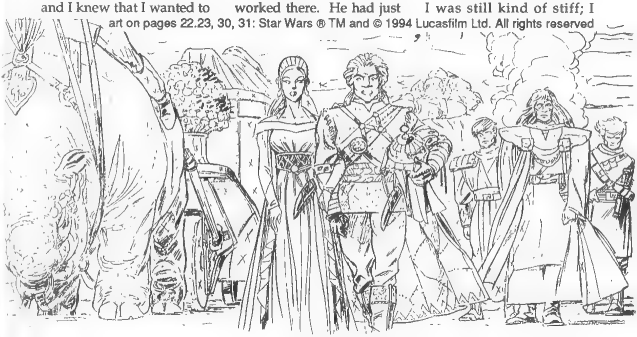


Electronic Board Surfing and the Comic Wave

Accepted or not, comic fans are everywhere along the electronic highway. Here's a fanboy's guide to who's out there...

by Frank Pisarski

I'm sitting in front of my computer minding my own business, when one of my users (who shall remain anonymous) says he wants me to write an article for his rag on Bulletin Boards and Comics. What kind of bulletin boards, I inquire smartly. Big ones. Who's paying for the connect time I inquire with great foresight. You are, with even greater foresight. "Cheap schmuck" I reply under my breath. Will there be a gold foil, die cut cover in a poly bag with my trading card involved I ask. Yep! With modem and dialing directory in hand I venture forth. After a few steps, I went back for the computer.

First, let's define the beast we're after. What is a big Bulletin Board? Hell, what's a bulletin board? In a nutshell (where exactly is this humongous nutshell we keep putting things in?), a bulletin board is a computer system that allows people or other intelligent creatures to call it and run software that is resident (or even passing through on the way downtown). Normally the software is designed to handle messaging between users, private mail in some cases, file transfers to and from. Some systems will let you play games on them; some are designed to let you order stuff, etc. The primary focus here is the ability to message or "talk" to and interact with other users sharing your passion for something. Most systems have rules of some sort regarding language and buying/selling/trading on-line. Most systems have fees. Some systems can be reached by local access telephone numbers, thereby cutting your phone bill (Maybe!). Some systems offer techniques on-line so it's cheaper to call long distance and pull down the message base. I'll get to the long distance misconception later. Most boards rely on forums, conferences, rooms, etc. as their vehicle for discussion. This means you type your message into an area devoted to the topic and everyone else reads it and responds to it the same way. It's not "real time". You will have to wait around for the response, sometimes for days. A few boards rely more heavily on "on-line chat"; this means you type it and other users on-line see it and immediately call you a jerk!

Most people are familiar with Compuserve, Prodigy and America On-line; they do the most freebie advertising. A few more users are aware of the other "biggies"; Delphi and Genie. I'm going to be bold and distinguish these from Bulletin Boards and call them On-line Services. All have local access numbers, all have fees; some simple some so complex that the Wharton Business School couldn't figure out their bill. All have lots and lots of users. Each has its own personality and its users reflect that. Most people don't join this type of service for a comics discussion; they join to avail themselves of the vast array of other services offered.

The second group of boards are true bulletin boards run by little guys like me on their personal computers. No big advertising budgets here; you've got to root them out. They range from one line to 250 line boards. Usually the rules are relaxed somewhat, and free speech is tolerated a little more. In some cases it's too tolerated. I included one of these boards in my sample. Why you may ask? Because I'm already a member and it's a flat fee board (see the cheap schmuck comment above). It's long distance, but cheaper to use than local access boards.

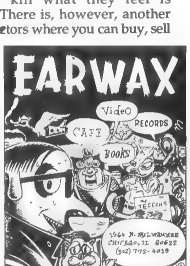
There is a last group that are not really Bulletin Boards; the "NETS". I'll get to those too. We've got the Internet, FIDOnet, Smartnet, Lostnet, IOMagnet, Throbnet; pick a word followed by NET and it probably exists. A "NET" is a group of boards that shares their messages on topics and wings them all over the globe electronically. You post a message on my board in Illinois, I do

magic and send it to a board in Arkansas; wallah, you've just posted your pithy comment regarding Superman in two states or more with one phone call. Even better, a user in Arkansas can take offense at your inane comment and tell you so on his/her board and it will get to my board, thereby ticking you off; you respond ... you get the picture. The big nets do this daily with thousands of messages. The real miracle is; a message only shows up once after its travels all over the world.

Onto our journey:

Compuserve (CIS) - the big daddy of On-line Services. It's the oldest. It's the biggest. It has the most complex billing structure in existence. With this service, I think you can do anything. Before I go further, let me say that you can spend a lot of money if you don't know what you're doing. I cheated and used navigators and off-line readers to cut my costs (see cheap comment above). The basic CIS command interface can be tough to use. CIS has been around so long that there are numerous interfaces to make life easy if you use DOS, DOS/Windows and even OS/2. These are available from CIS or as shareware. Get one. Charges are based on time spent in certain premium areas in addition to normal monthly fees for basic access. Guess what, this topic is a premium area. Once I found the right forum, (and it's not that difficult), I pulled down the message headers to pick my reading sample and see what kind of discussions were going on. First I read a discussion with Neil Gaiman regarding which American actors can simulate British accents best and vice versa. (I think the winners were Meryl Streep and Kevin Klein) A plus if you are into it - CIS has a listing of industry professionals that are members. I understand they get a deal on rates as long as they agree to participate. Onward to comics discussions. Discussions were interesting and all over the place. There seems to be a backlash in this group with DC's beating up of Superman and The Batman. Azrael certainly isn't popular. The perception that DC is using abhorrent tactics to generate sales received mixed reaction. Some don't like it because of the commercialism involved; others agree with the commercialism because DC is after all, in business to get readers. There is mucho discussion whether the comic market has been saturated with titles. There was discussion of a Fantastic Four movie and the ramifications on the death of Reed Richards. (When did he die?) I even found somewhere to get Bats #500 for 50 cents. CIS does have chat capacity, but it costs more so I didn't try to find one for comics. CIS seems to let you buy/sell/trade without being herded to a different area. CIS seems to have a more mature user base due to its cost and its age as a system. There are people who grew up with this system.

Prodigy (P*) - you've all seen the yellow boxes with freebies in them. The first service to provide a graphical interface for its users. That means pictures folks! Hundreds of thousands of people suddenly are on-line (if they can get their modem installed, that is). Prodigy provides propriety software to enter their system. The big complaint with Prodigy has always been the slow speed of their system, not a big deal when you're only paying $9.95 per month for unlimited access. It is a big deal when you are suddenly being billed by the hour. Prodigy's editor for writing messages is fairly crude. It uses the big blocky letters and you can't fit much on a "page". You find yourself hitting "NEXT" a lot to read the pearls of wisdom you've found. Of course, you have to wait for the screen to bring up those pearls. On the plus side, if you wear eyeglasses, you can probably take them off. The discussions in the "ARTS BB" section tend to be fanboy oriented, i.e. "my comic is better than your comic" or "the Azrael Batman's cool". There are lots of messages for hours of reading. Oh yeah, you gotta pay by the hour while you read them. I will admit, I found the top ten lists from users interesting. Spawn was only in one, and the discussions didn't include Image, centering more on DC and Marvel. You can't buy/sell/trade in this section. There are moderators who keep an eye on this and will kill what they feel is inappropriate. There is, however, another section for Collectors where you can buy, sell and trade (assuming you're not a dealer). Prodigy has been in a state of change lately and can't seem to decide on its screen design, room structure or billing structure. One comment of note; one of the users



responded to inquiries regarding the best service by saying the best comic discussions were in one of the "NETS". Huh, what are you doing on Prodigy then?

America On-line (AOL) - is the new kid on the block. They have the little white boxes with freebies in them. After it was discovered that the everyday person could be lured to an On-line Service, they jumped in. AOL also provides proprietary software to use their system. They have an interface for the DOS world and the DOS/Windows world. This service is probably best known for its "Chat" rooms. AOL doesn't rely on or implement Forums as well as others. Unlike the massive message bases of other systems, AOL's are small. I did a search for comic and nothing came up. However, it does implement "Chat" better than anyone. The good part of this is your discussions are real time. The bad part is you need to find someone to "talk" to you. If no one wants to talk, you might as well hang up. Without extensive message areas to read, there is nothing to do. Typically, user groups will schedule a meeting time on-line and create the room for discussion. Everyone shows up and shoots the bull. If you happen to be busy, too bad, you missed it. The Comic Connection meets Sunday nights from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM. I entered a couple of discussions and was somewhat disappointed. You must understand the difficulty with chat based systems; it's like a real conversation, everyone breaks in whenever they feel like it. The chat entering box is only one line long. If you need three lines, expect to see others' comments breaking up your conversation. It can get really hard to follow. At times you can totally lose the train of conversation. On the other hand, you can get some apparently unusual conversations. I've been in rooms where John Doe took offense at Harry Doe's answer to his comment; only to find he was answering the question 5 lines before his on the screen, which then takes 10 more lines to straighten out. Oh, by the way, you're paying for this by the hour after a certain point. Frankly, the discussions become very loose, lose focus and disintegrate, just like a real conversation. These rooms are policed by "Guides" who get to kick you out if you don't follow the rules. That happened while I was there. Some yutz claiming to be an attorney was scrolling the screen by constantly entering the same word over and over with the enter key. It effectively ends the conversation. I think the age group runs the gamut due to its "point and shoot" use. I use the Windows version, it seems slower than I remember and I always have little windows all over the place.

Delphi - No pretty graphics here! Get on the system and do your thing. Read messages to your heart's content. Pure text, and actually easy to read. It took me awhile to learn how to navigate it and find the comics area within the Hobby Area. I kept reading Ham radio talk! Once I found the comics section, I was surprised to find that the discussion is very heavily into Anima. I must admit, the level of discussion was very high and insightful. Heck, I got so absorbed in the discussion, I'm trying to find some of this Anima stuff! Don't get me wrong, the users and moderator encouraged people to open comic discussions; they just didn't. Maybe this will change. I get the impression that the system caters to adults more than a younger audience, and the traditional bashing doesn't go on. What a concept! By the way, the messages are long. That's good; you get a lot from one person. Some of these people are deep into the plots of Anima and obviously very analytical of the storylines. I sorta like this service! But I would use the Internet availability more.

GEnie - I didn't do this one. Frankly, I wasn't able to find a freebie package anywhere. And I ran out of time. No offense.

Big BBS (EXEC PC) - This is a BBS folks! No graphics, no pretty menus, no advertising, you need your own software. You get a menu with letters to hit to do something and it does it. Don't get the wrong idea folks, this sucker is fast and the owners very responsive to questions. EXEC PC is best known for its huge file areas and liberal access rules. If you need software or picture files, and can't find it here, it doesn't exist. I read somewhere that they were going to move into the traditional messaging base

more than in the past; so I gave it a try. First, the users are generally BBS'ers and don't have time for nonsense. They get on, find what they want, leave a message and get off. The non technical message bases aren't mature yet, possibly reflecting the change in focus. But I'm sure it will get there. For example, I call to dump the OS/2 base because it always has lots of good info and problem reports and answers. There is one message base advantage, however, and that is the addition of the FIDONET and QWK mail. Unfortunately, the QWK/FIDO system wasn't quite working when I was calling, so I only got one message base dump. Not to fear, I got 3,000 messages. (I forgot to reset my upper limit! or I would have gotten more). Do you know how long it takes to read 3,000 messages on comics? Consider that when you deal with a service that makes you stay on-line to read them. It's important as we'll see later. When you get into a board like this, you are really joining the board's other features and its membership cost and dialup costs. FIDONET is not owned by EXEC PC or any board. It's available to the guy down the street from you if he wants it. Technically, you can get it yourself without being a BBS if you know how. You are really getting into ease of use, availability and access features.

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large memberships in the hundreds of thousands of users. In theory, any one message area can have lots of messages on your topic of interest for you to read. The little one line BBS down the street from you that charges $10 to join doesn't have that large a base to draw from. Let's say it has 100 members, of which ten leave messages on comics. Not much. Let's say there is another board a mile away in the same situation. Now we have 20 messages, but you can only read 10 unless you join both boards. Multiply this all by 20,000 or more boards worldwide and you suddenly have a whole lot of discussion. but not with each other.

THE "NETS" - These aren't BBS's. They are collections of BBS's that share message and file bases. Huh! What does this mean to me, you say! Let me show you. The big On-line Services have

Enter a "NET", any net. Through the net the sysops of the dinky little boards can share their messages with everyone else by calling each other and uploading and downloading all night when rates are cheap (this is referred to as "echoing"). If done right, no board even has to pay long distance charges. Everyone simply passes it on to the next guy down the road, and so on, and so on .... You call up the next day and there are 3,000 messages for you to read! Not bad for one phone line. Of course, you need to find a board with the NET and "echo' you are interested in. Imagine, sitting at home with a beer in one hand, learning that some guy in Germany or Luxembourg wants to pay bundles for your comic! Of course, now you have to worry about foreign currency translation. Call CIS, they can provide that info. Better yet, you can write to that guy in Luxembourg for 22 cents if you know how to do it and your local board cooperates! Be warned, all net echoes are moderated strictly to stay on topic. If you don't they kick you out; then they kick your sysop's board out, which means he has to hunt down another NET to join. This is anarchy in action, but it works. Here's the neat thing; you can get a huge amount of info -CHEAP! The messages run the gamut of topics as you would expect with a large audience.

HOW TO DO THIS RIGHT - First, all of the On-line Services offer freebie demos up to 10 hours of free use. Get them and try them. Be careful, 5 or 10 hours gets sucked up fast. That's important. Even the little BBS's usually have some type of promo time. See how long it takes to do what you want to do. Second, get a high speed modem. They don't cost much more than a 2400 Baud and they will greatly reduce connect time if you download files. Check the rate schedules, the Biggies charge more for using high speed. Try to find a Board with a NET that offers what you want. If they don't, ask the sysop. If possible, find a way to use off-line readers to use the board. Remember the 3,000 messages I read? I didn't read those on-line, it was long distance for me. I used QWK mail to download them and a high speed modem. It took me 16 minutes to get them and lots of other stuff. (If I'm correct, the cost is 16 x .11 or $1.76 at long distance rates. YOU can calculate the cost of calling local access at .03 per minute and hourly rates to read 3,000 messages while you are on-line. At 30 seconds to read a message, $.11 per minute the phone cost alone is $165.00. Since it would take 25 hours, you would have to pay for overage use on the service; and if you went to the bathroom during that time, highly probable, you would pay by the minute. Arggggghhhhh!!! So now you know the misconception; long distance boards may be cheaper than local access boards if they provide more useful features). After downloading the messages, I put them into my reader and read them at my leisure. It didn't interfere with the football game or anything and I did it over days; no cost pressure. QWK mail or other formats are easy to find nowadays. By the way, most readers let you write your messages off-line too. (You don't have one of those readers? Big deal! Call my board; I've got one that you can have for free, legally free.) Little point; find a board that processes the mail fast and reliably. I belong to one local board that always drops the carrier in the middle. Not good. You lose mail and have to start over. Last, get good communication software. Do it right and you can have the software call your favorite board at 3:00 in the morning, get your mail and the message bases you want; deliver your nasty commentary, hang up when done, unpack your mail and be ready for you in the morning! All this while the next guy is still trying to connect with his service and reading the first message! Oh yeah, if you're a mouse user, get RIP-capable communication software and use a board with RIP or other graphical interface. (But Frank, you yell, I don't have one of those RIP type communication programs you keep talking about! Big deal! Call my board; I've got one that you can have for free, legally free. And it works with any board.)

Someone just logged on and wonders if I would consider writing an article exploring Bulletin Boards as a vehicle for matchmaking and introduction services. What kind of Boards, I ask wisely and with great foresight. *Cheap schmuck!* Hmm, the user name is FAN..... Where's the power plug!!!

Bye! Feel free to call my board and leave a message on comics. Maybe I'll have my second NET by then.

(When he's not polybagging his comics or calling me a schmuck, Frank operates the Comics, Cards & Collectibles BBS.: 708-304-9803.) FANBOY!

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(Continued from page 23)

didn't know the dynamics of comic illustration at the time.

Fanboy: I have some of your Rusts.

Tony: Yeah! Actually, the first book he did was with James Kozinski. He had this property; it was Ginsu Hamsters or something.

Fanboy: For Now?

Tony: No, some little independent thing. Groundhogs! That's it: Ginsu Groundhogs. It was a decent effort for my first comic book. Well by the time we finished that, Paul was pretty much entrenched at Now and called me up to try a book. The first book I tried to do at Now was Valor Thunderstar, but by the time things got rolling, they had cancelled the book. I ended up on Ebbn, but they cancelled that series, too. Finally, I ended up on Rust, starting on issue 4. It had all the things I liked in a story. It fit in with all the things I liked to draw from commercial art; folks being folks and some action stuff, some glamour stuff, some shooting which I enjoy drawing.

Fanboy: So Now, then First, Eclipse, then Comico and Dark Horse?

Tony: Yeah, actually, Comico and Dark Horse came within a week of each other.

Fanboy: The first thing you did for Dark Horse was the annual? The Alien?

Tony: Yeah, that was my first with Dark Horse, which was with Paul Guinan again. I really like that story. I still really like Paul's layouts on that story and its got all of the elements you need in a story like that. Of course, the political thing is there, but the claustrophobic sense of being in a space capsule in all of that sprawling expanse...

Fanboy: That lead to Colonial Marines?

Tony: Right. Paul and I proposed a Predator script to them, but they shelved it. They gave us this little story (Alien) and that lead to the Colonial Marines story. Paul was given the book after he had done the Heartbreakers story with his wife, Anina, so originally it was supposed to be just Paul on the book, but Paul really dug working with me on the Alien short story, so he said, "hey, you're really good with tech. I'll do the layouts and inks and you do the pencils. Its right up your alley." That was October '91, but we didn't get started until December.

Fanboy: Was that when you did Planet of the Apes for Malibu?

Tony: Planet of the Apes fell in there right with the first issue (of Colonial Marines) - man, you're really pulling this stuff out!

below: Queen Galia, Nomi & Vima, Master Arca

Fanboy: You did two books simultaneously?
Tony: No, I just did covers on the Apes books.
Fanboy: Skip ahead now to the big one: here you are with this Jedi piece.
Tony: This is space opera on the grandest scale. I was a big fan of the movie series. When it came out, I was 17. I lived it, speaking the lines, the music, all of the toys.
Fanboy: Was this your dream project?
Tony: This is it. I guess being a relative newcomer to comics, there are a lot of dream projects out there, but I never dreamt that I could work on a property like this. The Aliens story was a complete surprise to me. The movie Alien floored me, it was a complete cultural change foe me. I guess that's when became a futurist. Not just the films, but the making of the movies really hooked me. I mean, Ron Cobb, Sid Mead, all the conceptual artists who worked on that.
Fanboy: Ron Cobb, another underground artist who came up.
Tony: Yeah! True! So, it wasn't so much the fantasy aspect as much as it was the design aspect of creating the fantasy that intrigued me. I'm very detail-oriented; I've loved aircraft all of my life, so when Dan Thorsland, who used to be at DC, offered me this script, I hit the ceiling. Jeremy Irons talks about this when he gets roles: he hears about a role that he really wants and he psychologically prepares for it and when he gets it, there's this complete elation, but after that, it's all work. Then you have to perform.
Fanboy: Did *you* ever get the shakes that way?
Tony: Yeah.
Fanboy: How'd you deal with it?
Tony: I'm most anxious before I get a script. The performance that I expect of myself, the performance that I expect to make, is still out there in the shadows.
Fanboy: Now that you've made the transition from fan to creator, how does it feel?
Tony: Empowering. It's self-realization. It's tapping into the self-conscious, the creative conscious. Being a fan is an expression of love, but being a creator you want to stay true to the lore, but you want to tell different stories, different aspects of the story. You understood that before there was a Republic before there was an Empire and that Boba Fett was a remnant of the old guard. It's like seeing a confederate soldier in his uniform or a World War I doughboy. I always try to do on paper the evolution of armor knowing that as weapons got better, the armor would improve, so I'd do sketches of how the weapons would change until it evolves into the Imperial Stormtrooper. I was fortunate, other people could dream of it, but I could draw. Now I can do the things that I wanted to see as a fan, and maybe for other fans, I can blow their tops.

above: Cay Qel-Droma and Tott Doneeta

FANBOY!

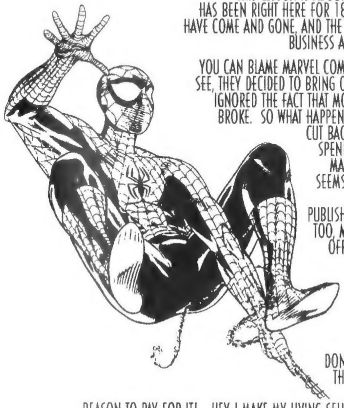
Next Issue:
Cool Animation
...hang loose and may the force be with you!

PARTING SHOTS/PAPARAZZI

Clockwise: 1) Caught taking a breather between signings: Alex Ross and pal, Ken Kooi.
2) Reactor's Mike Saenz and friends enjoy the nightlife at the Torchlight along with several dozen other artists and writers.
3) Hilary Barta and an unidentified red-head.
4) Alex Ross seized our Canon and captured Jill Thompson.
5) Mr Ross again, this time at Halley's Comics for the promotional signing of his new four-book series MARVELS. Hope everyone out there got their copies!
6) Tony Akins picks up his Thursday night stash o' comics.

❤ *Crystal MonAmour*

HEY! READ THIS!
IT'S ABOUT YOUR MONEY!!



THIS LESSON IS ABOUT MONEY, KIDS! VARIETY BOOKS HAS BEEN RIGHT HERE FOR 18 YEARS, AND A LOT OF TRENDS HAVE COME AND GONE, AND THE LATEST TREND AFFECTS MY OWN BUSINESS AND YOUR MONEY! HERE IT IS...

YOU CAN BLAME MARVEL COMICS FOR MOST OF THE TROUBLE. SEE, THEY DECIDED TO BRING OUT TONS OF TITLES, BUT TOTALLY IGNORED THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE U.S.A. IS JUST ABOUT BROKE. SO WHAT HAPPENS? ON ONE HAND, COLLECTORS CUT BACK ON WHAT THEY BUY, BUT STILL SPEND MORE BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY TITLES! AND, SINCE MARVEL SEEMS TO BE DOING GREAT BUSINESS, DC, IMAGE, AND ALL THE OTHER PUBLISHERS PRINT A LOT MORE COMICS TOO, MOSTLY TO AVOID BEING PUSHED OFF THE RACKS. THE RESULT? TOO MANY COMICS, NOT ENOUGH SPACE OR MONEY TO TAKE CARE OF THEM ALL! FOR YOU, THE OTHERS ARE NOT GOING TO STOP! SO START CUTTING DOWN! BE MORE SELECTIVE! DON'T BUY IT IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT! THINK ABOUT WHY YOU BUY WHAT YOU DO AND FIND A CLEAR REASON TO PAY FOR IT! HEY, I MAKE MY LIVING SELLING THIS STUFF, BUT I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S GOING TO GET WORSE, AND ALL OUR COMPLAINING ISN'T GOING TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!

SO MY ADVICE TO YOU IS TO TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT JUST WHAT YOU WANT!

Before you think this is a public service message, let me add this : When you decide what you do want, call Variety FIRST! 18 years, same location, taking care of Chicago collectors. If you haven't been in for awhile, come in and see what's new and what we can offer you!

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